

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1812

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7520

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ARAB LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE DR. HASSAN
SABRI AL-KHOLI

1. SUMMARY: CHARGE CALLED ON DR. AL-KHOLI MORNING
SEPTEMBER 18 AT THE CORAL BEACH HOTEL. DURING VISIT, DR.
AL-KHOLI DISCUSSED THE CHTAURA MEETING, THE RECENT LEBANESE
CABINET RESHUFFLE, THE SWEARING IN OF PRESIDENT-ELECT SARKIS,
AND ACTIONS HE THOUGHT THE USG SHOULD TAKE REGARDING
LEBANON DURING THE NEXT MONTH. END SUMMARY.

2. CHTAURA MEETING. AL-KHOLI SAID FIRST LEBANON/SYRIA/
PALESTINIAN MEETING AT CHTAURA SEPTEMBER 17 HAD NOT BEEN A
SUCCESS. "NOTHING HAS BEEN ACHIEVED," BECAUSE SYRIANS AND
PALESTINIANS DEEPLY DISTRUSTED EACH OTHER. FOLLOWING THE
MEETING, AL-KHOLI SAID THAT HE HAD SPENT ALL NIGHT
"UNTIL DAWN" WITH ARAFAT TRYING TO CONVINCE HIM THAT THE
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PALESTINIANS MUST MAKE A CONCESSION, BOTH IN THEIR OWN

INTERESTS AND IN THE INTEREST OF PRESIDENT, ELECT SARKIS. SARKIS WAS STRONGER THAN MANY PEOPLE REALIZED, BUT HE NEEDED SOMETHING TO STRENGTHEN HIS HAND. AL-KHOLI CLEARLY HAD IN MIND PALESTINIAN UNCONDITIONAL LEFTIST WITHDRAWAL FROM THE METN. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY DID NOT THINK THAT THIS WAS A "CONCESSION" BUT RATHER SOMETHING THAT PALESTINIANS WERE OBLIGATED TO DO BUT REGARDLESS OF THEIR VIEW THEY MUST MAKE THIS GESTURE. WHEN CHARGE NOTED THAT JUNBLATT HAD JUST SAID NATIONAL MOVEMENT FORCES WERE IN THE METN TO STAY, AL-KHOLI SNORTED "DON'T GIVE FIVE PIASTERS FOR WHAT JUNBLATT SAYS." AL-KHOLI SAID ABU IYAD, NOT ARAFAT, WAS NOW THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE PLO AND HZN IMPLIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER IN FACT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD MAKE THIS CONCESSION. NEXT MEETING IN CHTAURA NOW SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19. AL-KHOLI SAID HE "MUST HAVE SOMETHING BY TOMORROW NIGHT" OR THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD COLLAPSE.

3. LEBANESE CABINET RESHUFFLE. AL-KHOLI SAID THAT CHAMOUN'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THERE WOULD BE CABINET MEETING ON MONDAY (SEP 20) HAD PUT MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS TUEINI IN VERY DIFFICULT POSITION. THREE CABINET MINISTERS HAD TO ATTEND IN ORDER FOR THERE TO BE A QUORUM. CHAMOUN AND SKAFF CERTAINLY WOULD; KARAME, ARSLAN AND OSSEIRAN (WHO LEFT BY BOAT FOR ISTANBUL THIS MORNING TO AVOID THE ISSUE) CERTAINLY WOULD NOT. THIS LEFT TUEINI, WHO WAS VERY CLOSE TO CHAMOUN, BUT WHO HAD IMPORTANT POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS IN WEST BEIRUT, ON THE HOT SEAT. AL-KHOLI SAID THAT HE HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO TUEINI YESTERDAY TELLING HIM THAT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS FOR HIM TO RETURN TO WEST BEIRUT AT THIS TIME. IF HE ATTENDS THE CABINET MEETING, AL-KHOLI SAID, HE MIGHT NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN. AL-KHOLI SAID THAT THIS WOULD BE A VERY GOOD TIME FOR TUEINI TO GET INFLUENZA. (L'ORIENT SEPTEMBER 18 SAYS TUEINI WILL NOT ATTEND, PLEADING PRIOR COMMITMENTS ABROAD.)

4. SARKIS' INAUGURATION. AL-KHOLI SAID THAT PLANS HAD NOW BEEN APPROVED FOR SARKIS TO BE SWORN IN AT THE MUSEUM. HE HAD SENT GENERAL GHONEIM TO CALL ON CHAMOUN
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TO SECURE WRITTEN ASSURANCES FROM ALL ELEMENTS IN EAST BEIRUT THAT THEY WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH THE CEREMONY. THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCES WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ASSURING SECURITY IN WEST BEIRUT AND IMMEDIATE AREA.

5. LEBANON AND THE US. AL-KHOLI SAID THAT THE US HAS GREAT INFLUENCE IN LEBANON AND THE "PEOPLE IN THE STREETS" ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO US STATEMENTS AND

ACTIONS. SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER PERSONALLY HAS TREMENDOUS PRESTIGE. HE THEREFORE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF SECRETARY KISSINGER WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT VERY SOON AFTER PRESIDENT SARKIS' INAUGURATION PRAISING AND EXPRESSING STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT AND REITERATING OUR OPPOSITION TO ANY INTERFERENCE IN LEBANESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND OUR WILLINGNESS TO HELP LEBANON TO REBUILD ITS ECONOMY. DR. AL-KHOLI SAID SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD BE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. HE ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT THAT STATUS OF SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE TALCOTT SEELYE AND ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE US TO DESIGNATE A SIMILAR REPRESENTATIVE TO CALL ON PRESIDENT SARKIS SOON AFTER HIS INAUGURATION AS A GESTURE OF US SUPPORT. CHARGE REPLIED THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH HAD PREVENTED EMBASSY PERSONNEL FROM VISITING EAST BEIRUT DURING PAST THREE MONTHS, WOULD BE A FACTOR; AL-KHOLI AGREED THAT THIS WAS A PROBLEM, BUT SAID THAT THE ARAB LEAGUE FORCES INTEND TO SECURE THE ROAD FROM WEST BEIRUT TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT BAABDA IMMEDIATELY AFTER SARKIS' INAUGURATION.

6. WHEN ASKED ABOUT SARKIS-SADAT MEETING, AL-KHOLI SHRUGGED AND SAID "CAIRO IS ONE YEAR LATE." HE SAID SYRIA WAS KEY ELEMENT IN THE EQUATION BUT DID NOT OFFER ANY ANALYSIS OF SYRIA'S GOALS OR INTENTIONS. HE SAID "THE STREET" ON BOTH SIDES IS TIRED OF THE WAR AND HAS NOTICED THAT IT IS THE PEOPLE, NOT THE LEADERS, WHO ARE GETTING KILLED. HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT THE NEXT MONTH, AND PARTICULARLY THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. "AFTER THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE (OCTOBER 18) THE SITUATION WILL BE TRANSFORMED." HE WAS HOPEFUL, BUT NOT CONFIDENT.

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